

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-01

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLAB, FR

SUBJECT: CGT ADMISSION BY ETUC

SUMMARY. MAY 5 ISSUES OF "LE MONDE" (FRANCE), "THE TIMES" (U.K.), "LA STAMPA" (ITALY), "DIE WELT" (FRGJ) PUBLISHED JOINT INTERVIEW BY EDMOND MAIRE, SEC GEN OF CFDT, AND H.O. VETTER, DGB PRESIDENT. INTERVIEW IS A STUDY OF CONTRAST BETWEEN DGB "REFORMIST" APPROACH WHICH SEEKS "TO USE" THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM TO SECURE IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE WORKERS AND CFDT'S REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH WHICH IS BENT ON CHALLENGING THE SYSTEM AND SEES NO HOPE FOR THE FUTURE WITHOUT RADICAL STRUCTURAL

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CHANGES IN THE ECONOMY. VETTER EXPRESSED DOUBTS THAT

CGT WILL MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR ETUC ADMISSION. CGT REACTED STRONGLY ACCUSING VETTER OF INTERFERENCE IN CGT INTERNAL AFFAIRS. END SUMMARY.

1. ASKED ABOUT ETUC AND THE POSSIBILITY OF WFTU AFFILIATES BEING ADMITTED BY IT, VETTER REFERRED BRIEFLY TO THE DISAPPOINTMENTS WHEN WFTU WAS ORGANIZED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WAR AND WENT ON TO MAKE THE POINT THAT ETUC MEMBERS SHARE A FEW BASIC PRINCIPLES. WITH REFERENCE TO THE CGIL, VETTER SAID THAT ITS ADMISSION BY ETUC WAS BASED ON THE FACT THAT ALL THREE ITALIAN CONFEDERATIONS SHARED THESE SAME PRINCIPLES AND "CGIL HAD TAKEN ITS DISTANCE FROM WFTU".

2. AS FOR CGT, VETTER SAID, "IT IS DOUBTFUL IN OUR OPINION THAT CGT IS READY TO MEET THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH WERE ACCEPTED BY CGIL. WE DO NOT WANT OUR MEMBERS TO HAVE TWO INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS." WHEN REMINDED THAT CFDT IS ALSO A MEMBER OF WCL, VETTER REPLIED THAT THE ICFTU AND WCL ARE VERY CLOSE TO EACH OTHER AND ARE ALREADY ENGAGED IN DISCUSSIONS FOR POSSIBLE UNIFICATION.

3. IN A THOUGHTFUL RESPONSE, MAIRE POINTED OUT TRADE UNIONS IN EUROPE ARE LAGGING BEHIND BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENTS IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND COORDINATION. HE THOUGHT ETUC IS CAPABLE OF ENGAGING IN DISCUSSIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BUT INCAPABLE OF DEVELOPING A COORDINATED ACTION PROGRAM. HE CAUTIONED THAT ETUC SHOULD NOT BE OVERLY AMBITIOUS AND SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON SMALL NUMBER OF KEY ISSUES ON WHICH COORDINATED ACTION IS POSSIBLE. IN LIGHT OF THIS MAIRE SAID THAT "ETUC CANNOT DEPRIVE ITSELF OF THE HELP OF ANY ORGANIZATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES." IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT CFDT FAVORS CGT ADMISSION.

4. GEORGES SEGUY, CGT SEC GEN, WASTED NO TIME IN RESPONDING TO VETTER'S COMMENT. IN A STATEMENT ISSUED 6 MAY SEGUY SAID THAT CGT WAS "EXTREMELY SURPRISED" FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:
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A) FOLLOWING CGT APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION AND BY DECISION OF THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, VETTER WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET WITH CGT TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. THE FACT THAT THE ETUC PRESIDENT CHOSE TO CONVEY THROUGH THE PRESS HIS THOUGHTS ON THE CGT APPLICATION IS NOT THE KIND OF ACTION WHICH WILL FACILITATE FUTURE EVENTUAL DISCUSSIONS.

B) THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT MENTION IS MADE OF
ANY REQUIREMENTS WHICH CGIL HAD TO MEET AND CGT KNOWS
NOTHING ABOUT SUCH REQUIREMENTS.

CJ VETTER'S STATEMENT SUGGESTS THAT CGT WILL BE
ASKED TO RENOUNCE ITS CURRENT INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION.
"THIS CONSTITUTES AN INADMISSIBLE DISCRIMINATION IN
VIEW OF THE FACT THAT OTHER ETUC MEMBERS HAVE RETAINED
THEIR AFFILIATION WITH ICFTU OR WCL; AN INTOLERABLE

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ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE WITH OUR FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND
A VIOLATION OF OUR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE."

D) SEGUY'S STATEMENT CONCLUDES WITH THE WARNING THAT
SINCE VETTER SEEMS TO HAVE SPOKEN IN THE INTERVIEW
NOT REPEAT NOT IN A PERSONAL CAPACITY, CGT INTENDS
TO CONTACT THE ETUC MEMBERS TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT
KIND OF REACTION VETTER'S STATEMENTS HAVE ELICITED.

5. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION WITH U.K. AND U.S.
LABOR COUNSELORS ON 6 MAY, RENE DUHAMEL, DIRECTOR OF
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CGT'S INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, STRESSED THE DISCRIMINA-
TION POINT IN SEGUY'S STATEMENT ABOVE AND CGT'S
DETERMINATION TO REACT STRONGLY TO VETTER'S
INTERVIEW. WHILE EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE THAT EVENTUALLY
(IN A YEAR OR SO) CGT WILL BE ADMITTED BY ETUC,
DUHAMEL APPRECIATED THE NEED THAT THIS SHOULD COME
ABOUT THROUGH A CONSENSUS AND NOT BY MAJORITY VOTE
WHICH HE CLAIMED CGT CAN SECURE IN ETUC ANY TIME.
IN CITING THE VARIOUS REASONS FOR WHICH SOME ETUC
MEMBERS CONTINUE TO OPPOSE CGT APPLICATION, DUHAMEL
READILY AGREED THAT ONE OF THESE IS CGIL'S SENSITIVITY
AT THE PROSPECT OF A WFTU AFFILIATE BEING ADMITTED TO
ETUC WITHOUT MAKING THE SAME CONCESSION AS IT HAD
AGREED TO MAKE. DUHAMEL THOUGHT THAT CGIL'S STATUS AS
WFTU ASSOCIATE MEMBER WAS DESIGNED TO SERVE MORE THE
PURPOSE OF ITALIAN LABOR UNITY THAN ADMISSION TO ETUC.

6. IN A SIDE COMMENT DUHAMEL WAS QUITE EMPHATIC IN
STATING THAT CGT HAS INSISTED IN THE WFTU COUNCILS
THAT ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP DOES NOT ENTITLE THE
AFFILIATE TO BE REPRESENTED IN KEY POSITIONS IN THE
WFTU HIERARCHY. IN OTHER WORDS, HE IMPLIED THAT CGIL
CANNOT HAVE THE CAKE AND EAT IT TOO. IN AN ATTEMPT
TO FURTHER MINIMIZE CGIL'S ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP IN
WFTU, DUHAMEL REMARKED THAT NO OTHER AFFILIATE HAS
FOLLOWED THE CGIL EXAMPLE.

7. COMMENT. TWO THINGS ARE CLEAR FROM THE FOREGOING:
CGT DETERMINATION TO GET INTO ETUC WITHOUT ANY
COMPROMISES REGARDING ITS WFTU AFFILIATION AND CGT
CONFIDENCE THAT IT WILL SUCCEED IN DOING SO, VETTER'S
INTERVIEW NOTWITHSTANDING. THIS CONFIDENCE SEEMS
TO BE BASED ON THE VIEW THAT GIVEN CGT'S MAJORITY
POSITION IN FRENCH LABOR SCENE ETUC CANNOT DEVELOP
AND PURSUE A REALISTIC ACTION PROGRAM WHICH WOULD IN-
VOLVE FRANCE WITHOUT CGT SUPPORT. THERE IS OBVIOUSLY

SOME BASIS FOR CGT'S SELF-ASSESSMENT AS AN ESSENTIAL
ELEMENT IN WE LABOR SCENE BUT THIS DOES NOT MAKE CGT
INDISPENSABLE FOR ETUC ACTIVITIES.

8. THERE SHOULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL
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IMPLICATIONS IF CGT WERE TO BE PROVEN RIGHT AND DGB
AND LIKE-MINDED ETUC MEMBERS WERE TO BACK DOWN AND
ACCEPT CGT MEMBERSHIP WITHOUT ANY CONCESSIONS REGARDING
AFFILIATION WITH WFTU. NOW THAT THE ISSUE HAS BEEN
JOINED IN PUBLIC ETUC CANNOT AFFORD TO MAKE ANY
ACCOMMODATIONS.
RUSH

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